

Lincolnshire ALERT



PERSONAL TELEPHONE NUMBERS SCAM ALERT

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Message sent by

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Background info

“070” numbers featured in over 2,600 fraud reports received by Action Fraud over the past year. Known as ‘personal numbers’, they are virtual numbers often programmed to forward incoming calls to one of a list of fixed or VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) telephone numbers pre-selected by the client.

VoIP numbers allow phone calls over the Internet, enabling calls to be made or received anywhere with an internet connection, which makes tracing the calls much more difficult. Fraudsters will provide a “070” number to victims while masking the number(s) that it diverts to, thus adding some protection to their true identity and location.

Although legitimate numbers, calls to “070” numbers are charged at a premium rate and they have long been used by fraudsters to scam unwitting victims.

Charges

Calls from a landline can cost up to 65p p/min and may incur an additional call set-up fee of up to 51p. Calls from mobiles can cost up to £1.50 p/min.

In extreme cases, victims have received triple figure phone bills as a result of calling these premium rate numbers.

Various methods Used

- Fraudster sends a text message to or leaves a voicemail/missed call on the victim’s phone. The victim then calls back assuming this is a UK mobile number and is unwittingly connecting to a premium rate number.
- Fraudster places an advert for a job on an online shopping/auction site along

with an “070” number for the victim to call to obtain more information about the post and/or apply for it over the phone.

- Fraudster contacts an individual who is selling an item on a shopping website and sends fake PayPal emails to the victim requesting a shipping fee to be paid via Western Union, prior to the payment being released to the victim. They will often provide an “070” number, causing the victim to incur further charges if they attempt to make contact with the suspect. ‘Personal numbers’ will often be programmed to forward calls to VoIP numbers in order to reach offenders based overseas.

Prevention advice

- If anyone approaches you online or otherwise providing an “070” number for contact, be wary that this could be a scam and do not call the number.
- Consider informing PhonepayPlus, which regulates premium numbers and has statutory powers to stop mobile phone frauds and fine the offenders.

If you, or anyone you know, have been affected by these, or any other scams, report it to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040, or visiting www.actionfraud.police.uk